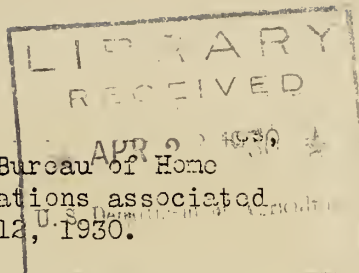


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A radio talk by Dr. Louise Stanley, Chief of the Bureau of Home Economics, delivered through Station WRC and 34 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, Saturday, April 12, 1930.

You have been hearing from week to week about the various divisions in the Department of Agriculture, especially in their relation to the land grant colleges. These two groups make up the most important educational agencies in our country for the furtherance of agriculture and rural life. The increasing development of Home Economics has spread its influence into our twenty-four million homes. It is especially about the place of Home Economics in this big educational enterprise that I am going to tell you today.

The original land grant act, known as the Morrill Act, was for the teaching of agriculture, engineering and homemaking in the states. Many of the states quite early established divisions of Home Economics. This Home Economics in the beginning looked to the more practical phases, largely sewing and cooking. These were developed as skills, loosely associated with the underlying sciences. They were taught as rule-of-thumb processes with little understanding of the reasons why. It is not strange that at first the necessity for research in this field was not appreciated.

Now we not only realize that science can help in explaining these rule-of-thumb processes, but we have a larger vision for homemaking and see more fundamental housekeeping and homemaking problems which must be studied scientifically if they are to be solved. Science is more important in the home than anywhere else. In fact, scientific research is of little value in promoting better living unless its findings are finally applied in home practices.

Home Economics as a separate division has come pretty late into the picture here in the Department of Agriculture at Washington. Home Economics departments were established in practically all the states long before it came as a separate division here, but even before the establishment of a separate bureau of the Department of Agriculture there was work along the lines now being looked upon as a part of our field. Our Bureau of Home Economics is an outgrowth of scientific work on nutrition and use of food begun in the Department more than forty years ago by Dr. Atwater. The Home Economics departments in the land grant colleges helped with his earlier dietary studies and they looked to the work in foods and nutrition done in the Office of Home Economics under the direction of Dr. Langworthy, Caroline Hunt and Helen Atwater, as a source of material which was useful both in residence and extension work in the states. With the further development of the work in the land grant colleges and particularly with the growth of Home Economics extension, this early work exclusively on foods and dietary problems was extended to include other phases of Home Economics. And so we have the beginning of a science for home economics comparable to that the Department has developed in other fields.

It remained for Secretary Wallace, in connection with the reorganization of certain divisions of the Department of Agriculture in 1923, to recommend the establishment of a separate Bureau of Home Economics coordinate with the other bureaus. It was his hope that this Bureau would not only

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study "the relative utility and economy of agricultural products for food, clothing, and other uses in the home", but that it would build up a body of factual material which through the land grant colleges, the extension agents and the schools would reach every home of our country. Also, that the development of this work in Washington would stimulate in the states the development of Home Economics research which is essential for the building of any sound teaching program, either extension or resident.

The work of the Bureau is at present carried on under three main divisions - food and nutrition, economic studies, and textiles and clothing. The work of the foods and nutrition division has a double point of view. It shows food demand to producers and distributors of foodstuff and guides the consumer in food choice. Volume production figures show that this country has an abundance of food, yet we know under-nourishment is prevalent. Food habits are being studied to find out whether the difficulty is bad distribution, so satisfactory foods can not be had, low incomes so funds are not available to purchase needed food, or lack of knowledge of the simple facts of nutrition which would make possible wise choice. This last we know is an important factor.

Many of the fundamental facts of nutrition are not being applied in actual practice because they have not been translated into forms that can be used by the homemaker. This is a very important function of one division of the Bureau. Figures on food composition must be compiled and kept up-to-date since these are the basic terms used in translating nutrition facts into everyday diets. The close relation between vitamins and health is being shown by nutrition studies. Vitamin studies must follow to find out in which of the foods these vitamins are present and how they are affected by various methods of handling.

Studies on food preparation in the Bureau connect directly with the Department's experimental work on food production, and benefit both consumer and producer. As part of a nation-wide cooperative study on the influence of various production factors on the palatability of meats, the Bureau each year cooks hundreds of cuts from experimental animals for testing and final judging as to eating quality. As a by-product of this research, designed primarily to assist the livestock industry in better meat production, home methods of cooking meats are developed. Similar work is under way on potatoes, to determine the cooking quality of seedling varieties and the influence of soils and fertilizers on flavor and texture. It is planned to make similar tests on other well-known foodstuffs and on new foods seeking a place on the market.

Research to develop more effective utilization of clothing and textiles is an aid to the grower as well as the user. So far, the work has centered on cotton and wool, since these are the important textiles in American agriculture

New ways of using standard materials in women's and children's clothing and house furnishings have been found, and in cooperation with manufacturers new fabrics have been developed for certain definite purposes. Osnaburg, for instance, an inexpensive fabric made of low-grade cotton and hitherto used only for industrial purposes, now retails in large quantities for use in curtains, couch covers, and other home furnishings. Its possibilities as an artistic fabric for interior decoration had not been recognized until tests were

made by the Bureau of Home Economics.

Likewise, the designs originated for children's sun suits with tops of bobbinet and other open-mesh cotton fabrics permitting the ultra-violet rays to reach the body, suggested a new use for fabrics of this type. Through the cooperation of the Cotton Textile Institute new fabrics suitable for children's protective play garments have been manufactured and put on sale.

Children's clothing designed in the Bureau, besides pointing to a better utilization of textiles, is in accord with the findings of modern child psychology, child training, preachment, and hygiene. Each garment is designed so as to encourage self-help, active play, and good posture, and yet give good service and be as easy to make and care for as is consistent with good standards.

The Economics Division maintains no laboratory but its studies are based on information collected under home conditions by cooperating homemakers. The expenditure of time and money in the household is studied to disclose principles which will help the homemaker to work out most satisfactory plans for use of time and money. From records of how families spend their income, kept by homemakers cooperating with the Bureau, recommendations are made for family budgets and methods of keeping household accounts. Some 2000 housewives have kept records of time spent in household tasks. These have been analyzed as a basis for studies in household equipment and household management, and to locate significant differences between urban and rural home conditions.

Since the establishment of the Bureau here in Washington, Home Economics research has been given a further impetus by the passage of a new experiment station Act, which appropriates money to the state experiment stations, some of which may be used for Home Economics research. It is gratifying to know that a portion of this money has been so used and while all of the states have not taken advantage of this fund for Home Economics research, fully 3/4 have. It is hoped that more of this fund will be made available for Home Economics studies and that other funds will be provided specifically for this work, which is so important in bettering home conditions the country over. The job is a big one. We have gotten a late start and only by working together are we going to furnish the American homemaker the help for which she is asking.

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